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PP RUEHROV
DE RUEHRH #1437 1881435
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
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FM AMEMBASSY RIYADH
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5941
INFO RUEHXK/ARAB ISRAELI COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHEG/AMEMBASSY CAIRO PRIORITY 2478
RUEHJI/AMCONSUL JEDDAH PRIORITY 8854

C O N F I D E N T I A L RIYADH 001437

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/07/2017

TAGS: PGOV PREL SA

SUBJECT: SAUDI AND EGYPTIAN LEADERS CALL FOR DIALOGUE IN REGION

REF: RIYADH 13758

Classified By: Deputy Chief of Mission Michael Gfoeller
for reasons 1.4(b) and (d).

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: King Abdullah discussed Lebanon, Palestinian issues, Iran, Iraq, and bilateral relations with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak during their June 26 meeting in Sharm al-Sheikh. The meeting immediately followed the quadripartite meeting on the West Bank and Gaza situation also held in Sharm al-Sheikh, which set the stage for discussions between the two Arab leaders. The Egypt stop was fourth on King Abdullah's international tour, which began on June 18, and landed him in Spain, France, and Poland. The tour focused on critical regional issues (reftel). The Egypt meeting reinforced Egypt's and the Kingdom's dual role as regional leaders and respected mediators. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (U) During their June 26 meeting in Sharm al-Sheikh, Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak briefed King Abdullah on the outcome of the June 25 quadripartite meeting also held in the Red Sea city and discussed ways to contain the violence between Fatah and Hamas, as well as how to bring them to the negotiating table. According to media reports, both leaders said that they would "not let anything harm the Palestinian interests" and both declared support for President Mahmoud Abbas as the head of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) and the leader of the Palestinian people.

¶3. (C) The Egyptian-Saudi summit also focused on the Lebanese situation, and the two leaders acknowledged the need for stability, discussing ways to protect Lebanon's national unity in light of increasing tensions. The leaders stressed the importance of national conciliation through dialogue and emphasized that this conciliation must be free from foreign intervention. According to the Saudi Press Agency, the two leaders "urged the Lebanese people to positively respond to the offer presented by the Arab League's Secretary General, who is also the head of the committee formed by the extraordinary meeting of the Arab foreign ministers." (Note: Foreign Ministers of Arab League nations held an extraordinary meeting in Cairo June 14 in the wake of the Gaza and Lebanon crises. During that meeting, a committee was formed with the purpose of visiting the region to support President Abbas and the Lebanese government. End Note.)

¶4. (C) The summit also covered the situation in Iraq, as well as the perceived "escalation" between the West and Iran on the Iranian nuclear issue. The two leaders urged the implementation of the Arab League Summit resolutions adopted in Riyadh in March. The "Riyadh Declaration" resulting from the March 28-29 Arab League Summit states that the region should be free of all weapons of mass destruction and there should be no "double-standard" regarding the possession of such weapons. The Declaration also warns against the "new dangerous and destructive race" to acquire nuclear weapons,

while affirming the right for countries to pursue nuclear energy programs for peaceful purposes, but in accordance with international terms -- to include inspection and monitoring.

15. (U) Press reports leading up to the summit circulated rumors of "lukewarm relations" and "a silent crisis" between Egypt and Saudi Arabia. This purported tension was attributed to a "power struggle" between the two nations for influence in the region, but both countries have repeatedly denied the allegations. The only "evidence" cited of this tension was Mubarak's immediate denial of King Abdullah's May announcement to build a causeway connecting the two countries over the Red Sea.

16. (C) COMMENT: The Egyptian-Saudi summit -- King Abdullah's first visit to Egypt since his ascension to the throne in 2005-- was a clear "meeting of the minds," and at least publicly successfully conveyed a united front. The summit also reinforced the discussions during the quadripartite meeting that aimed to reinvigorate the Arab-Israeli peace process. The King's support of multi-lateral efforts aimed at bringing the two Palestinian political factions back to the negotiating table signals a return to the SAG's preferred approach of dialogue through international fora, such as the Arab League. Statements made by Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Saud al-Faisal reflected obvious anger on the part of the Saudis due to what they termed a betrayal of the Mecca Accords brokered earlier this year. Al-Faisal was clear that the Saudis would no longer act as a mediator, but King Abdullah's joint statements with Mubarak clarified that the SAG will continue to support the Palestinians - albeit in a different capacity. END COMMENT.

FRAKER